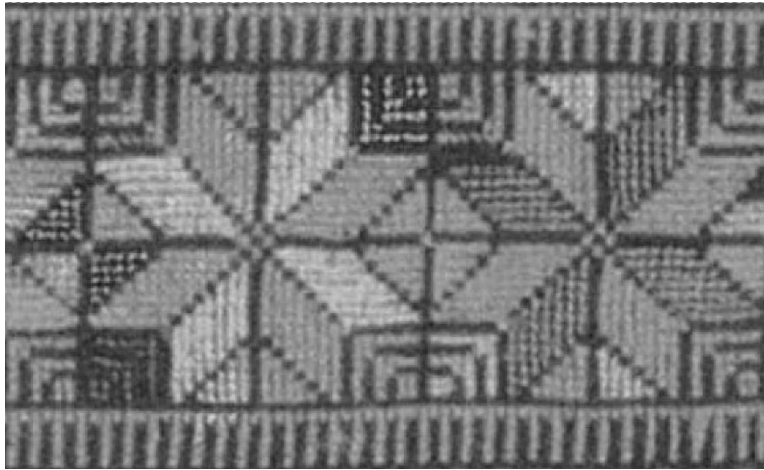
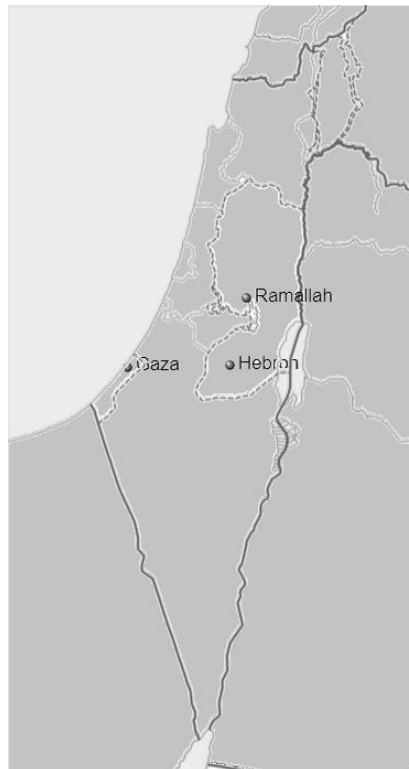


# MODERN PALESTINIAN FOLK EMBROIDERY PATTERNS



*Examples from  
Gaza, Hebron, Ramallah, and the Southern Region*



*adapted by Helen Hough*

*James G. Collins & Associates, 2023*

*Modern Palestinian Folk Embroidery Patterns: Examples from Gaza, Hebron, Ramallah, and the Southern Region*  
Hough, Helen (Editor)

James G. Collins & Associates, Arlington, Texas, 2023

Series: 19th & 20th century Embroidery

Extracted and adapted from “Palestinian Embroidery”, an issue of *Asalah Magazine*, Issue 2, September 2002; specifically pp. 6-7, a publication of the USAID.

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Dedication: For those who are afraid, thirsty, hungry, and may be seeking shelter. HH

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If you believe that this publication has some value to you, please consider donating what you think is a reasonable sum to some worthy purpose; even a tiny amount may make a difference somewhere. Some donations may also be tax deductible.

Consider the following organizations:

Services for at-risk children and families or community centers for our older neighbors.  
Your local food pantry so people under high levels of stress need not also go hungry.

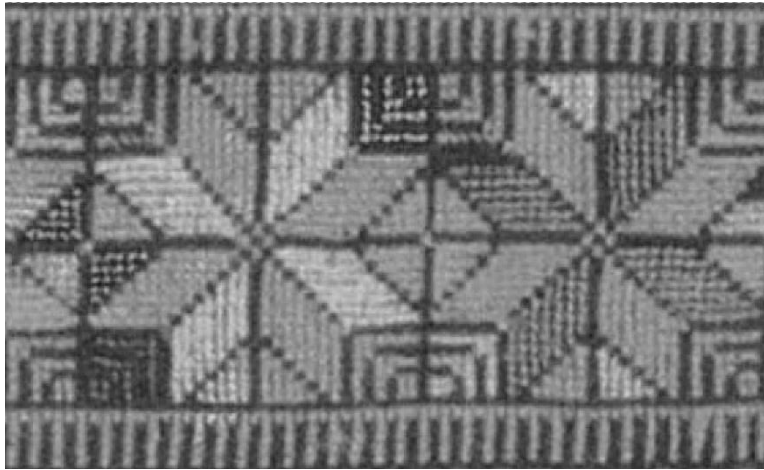
The *Antique Pattern Library* project is an excellent opportunity to support access to publications similar to this one. This service provides scans of craft pattern publications that are in the public domain or have permission to post. Many are edited for modern craftworkers and their technologies,  
<http://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/index.htm>.

Donations to your local library, a community college, or other learning scholarship fund are valuable local investments.

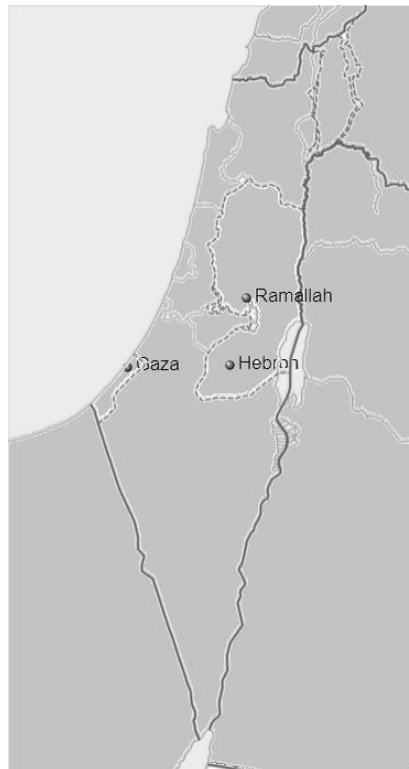
Consider also Archive.org as it helps make many resources available to all of us.

I would be surprised if any person or organization returns even a nominal donation.

# MODERN PALESTINIAN FOLK EMBROIDERY PATTERNS



*Examples from  
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# MODERN PALESTINIAN EMBROIDERY PATTERNS

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## Examples from Gaza, Hebron, Ramallah, and the Southern Region

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Text from:

*Palestinian Embroidery.*

*Asalah Magazine, Issue 2, September 2002, pp. 6-7.*

USAID.

*Patterns adapted from the same.*

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Patterns can be considered the building blocks of Palestinian embroidery. Although color and pattern arrangements vary – sometimes greatly – by region, the patterns themselves are a repetition of a limited number of shapes: stars, trees, squares, flowers and triangles, among others.

Multiple names – and meanings – are tied to each pattern. For example, some researchers believe that the "eight point star" – famous in Bethlehem embroidery – is derived from a meeting between the moon and Astarte, the Canaanite goddess of fertility.

The "zigzag" pattern, found primarily in Bedouin and Gazan embroidery, is said to be the staircase Astarte descended to rescue her husband from the god of death. However, Bedouin women tell a different story. For them, the zigzag pattern can be traced back to the pattern goats make when urinating!

The classic "S" pattern was also known as the "horse's head" or "leech".

Other pattern names echo things found in a rural woman's daily life: food – "seven eggs in a pan"; or, animals – "eyes of a cow". Other names are deliberately humorous, with either political or social commentary underneath. Two birds facing away from each other could be "a young woman and her mother in law", while two birds facing each other were referred to during the early 1980's as "Begin and Sadat".

And yet other motifs refer to millennia of foreign occupation: "pasha's tent" – a reference to Ottoman times; and "officer's badge" or "officers pips" to British Mandatory military uniforms.

For those "Asalah" readers who embroider, or who fancy themselves someday embroidering, following are a sampling of Palestinian embroidery patterns:

## **PALESTINIAN EMBROIDERY NOW**

Although cross-stitch embroidery has been in decline in recent decades, Palestinian women have continued to embroider. Older women embroider because it's part of their life. Younger women embroider for women's cooperatives which were set up to preserve embroidery traditions and provide rural and refugee women with an income.

Embroidery styles changed, however, reflecting a blending together of varied traditions. Colors and patterns which, for centuries, were tied to regions – even specific villages – became mixed together. Embroidery survived, but it was transformed from a village handicraft into an artistic expression of Palestinian identity.

With contemporary Palestinian women preferring the "jilbab", an unadorned long dress, to the traditional embroidered thoub, Palestinian embroidery today finds different expression: in modern apparel, such as shawls, and in house decoration. Embroidered pillows, tablecloths, wall

*hangings and other home decorations – sold through Palestinian women's cooperatives – today are very popular.*

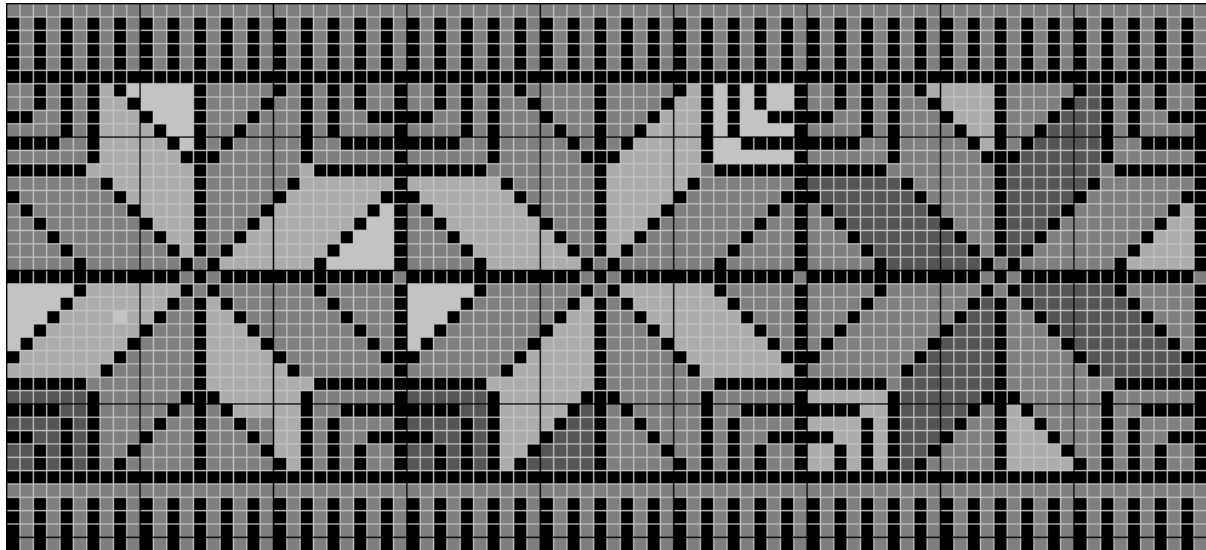
*Echoing the words of a young woman at a UNRWA embroidery cooperative in Gaza:*

*“We no longer embroider as our grandmothers did. That’s true. Instead we embroider for our homes – and for work... But no one can stop it. Embroidery is our heritage. We long it... and we are proud of it.”*

*\*Consider examining the original color publication from 2002 for color images. The patterns reproduced here are gray scale for lower cost printing.*

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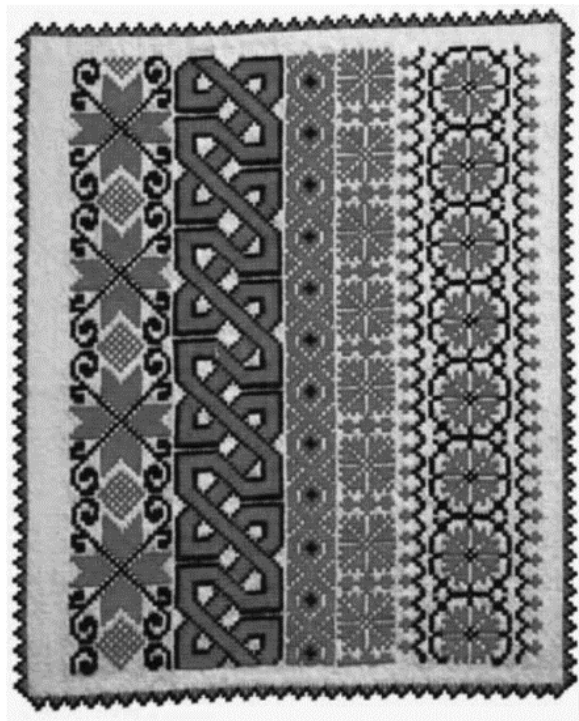
### *Common Across the Region*



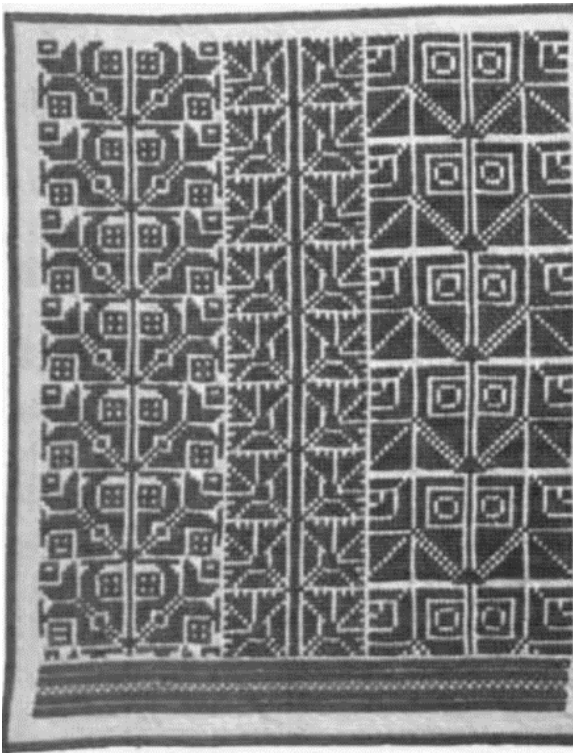
Gaza



Hebron



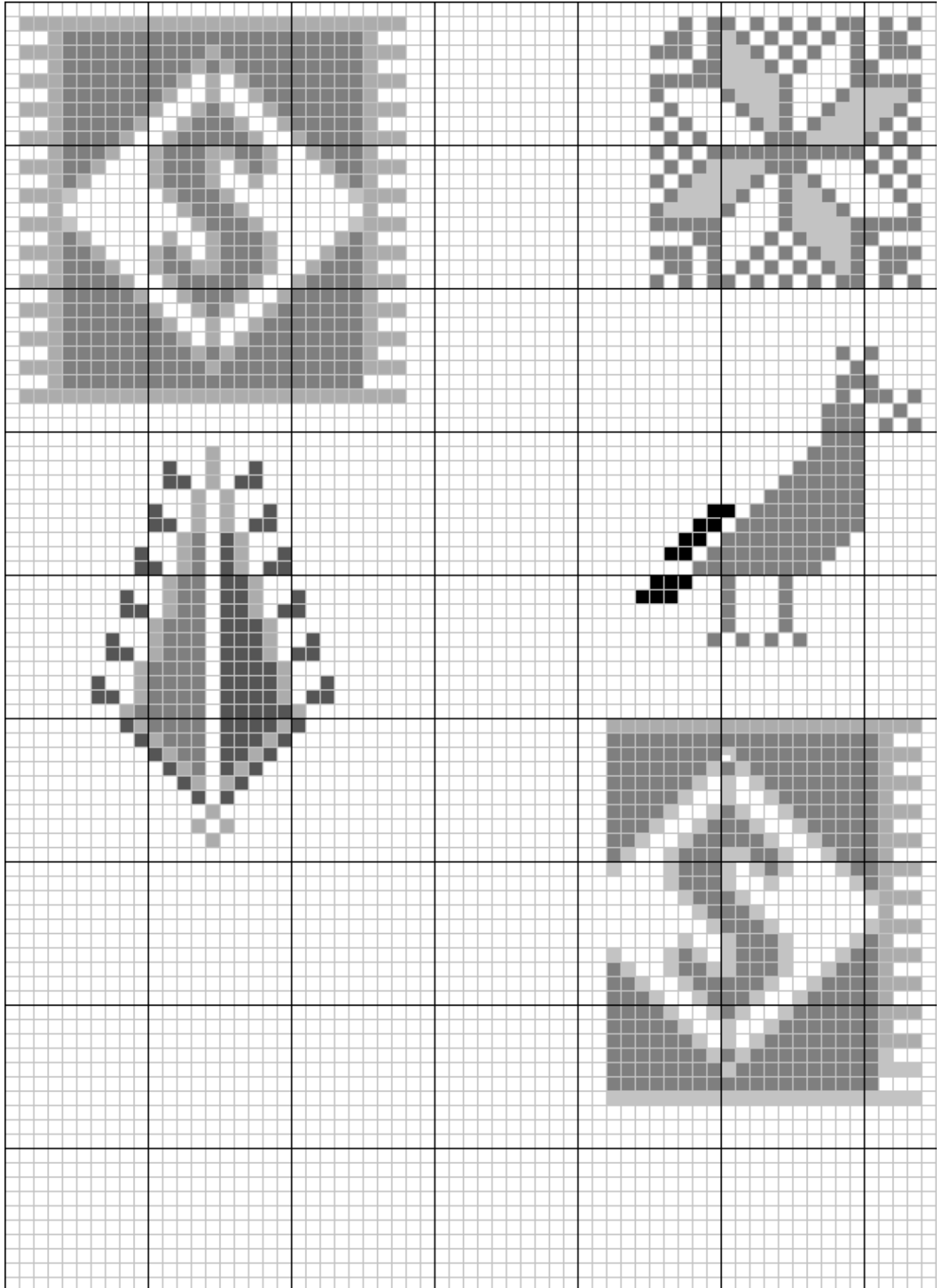
Southern Region



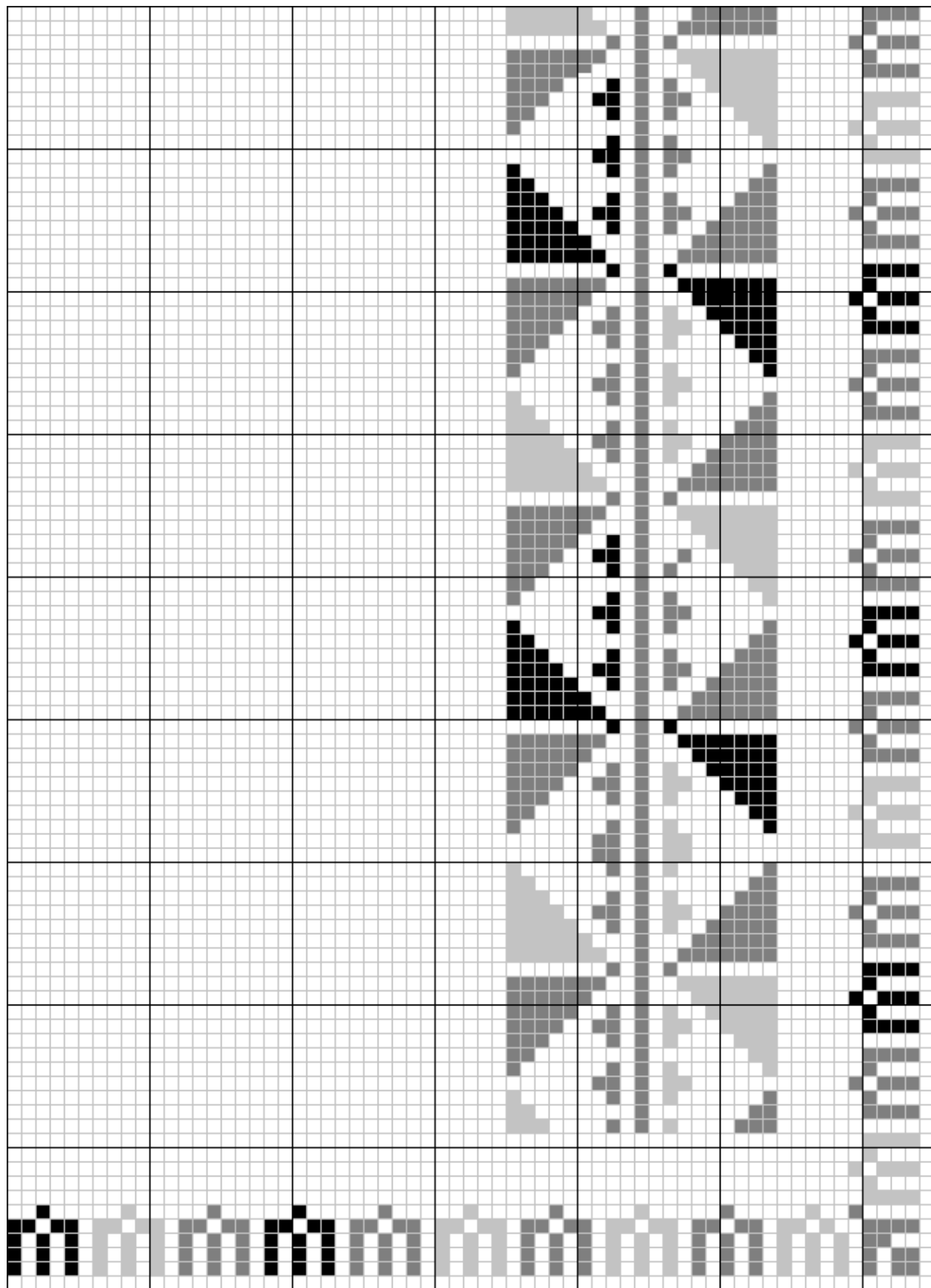
Ramallah



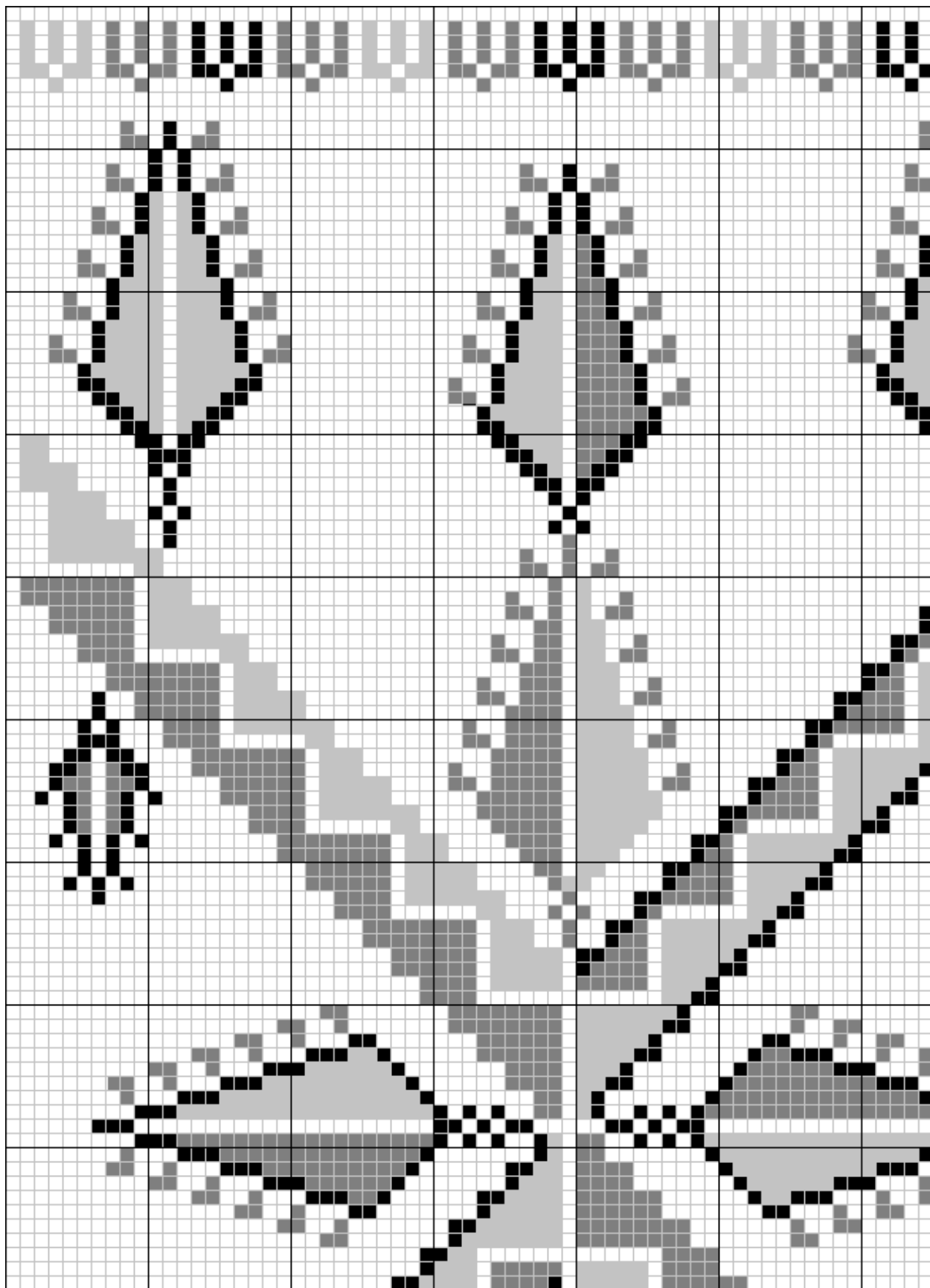
*Common Across the Region*



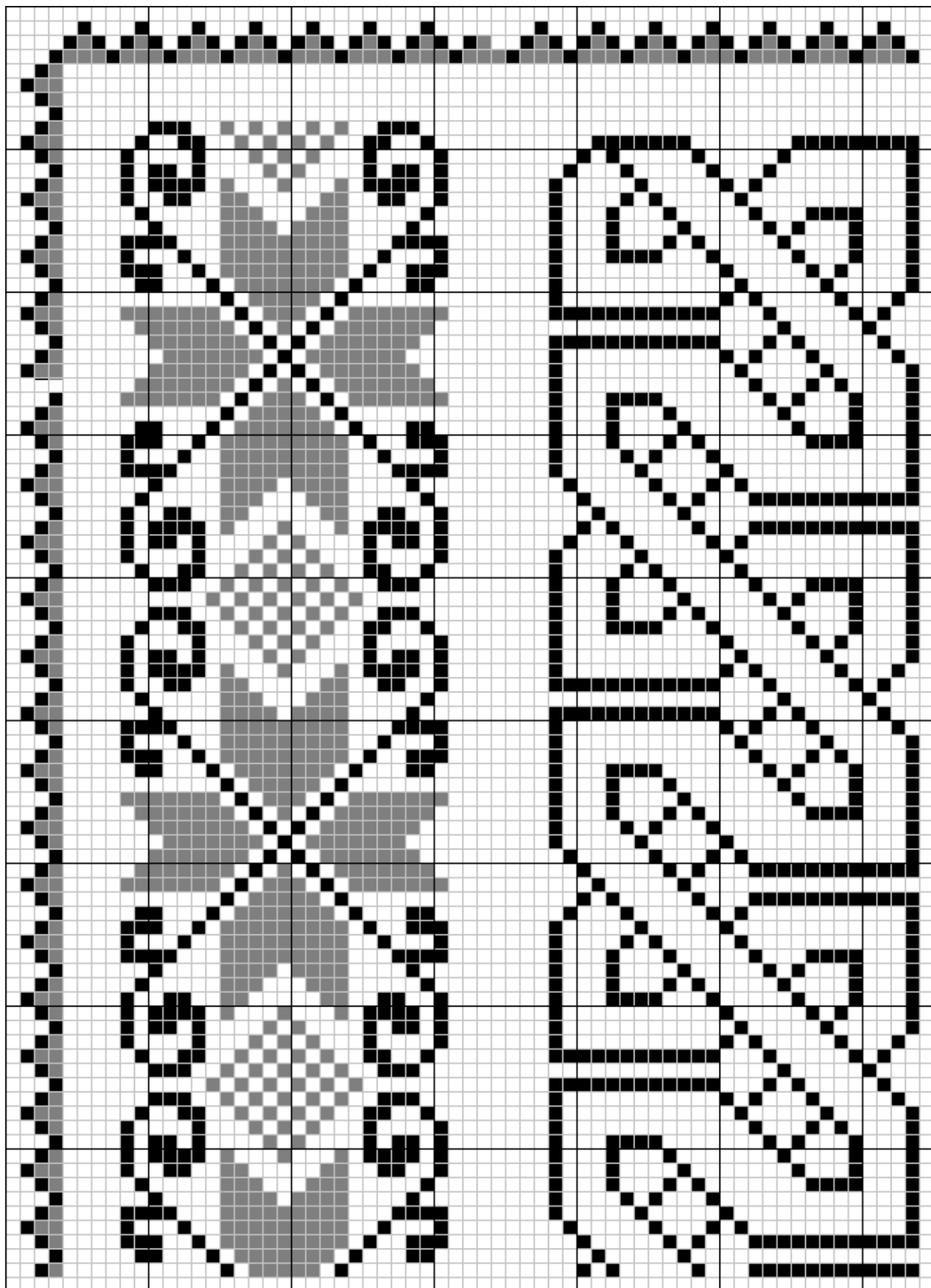
# Gaza



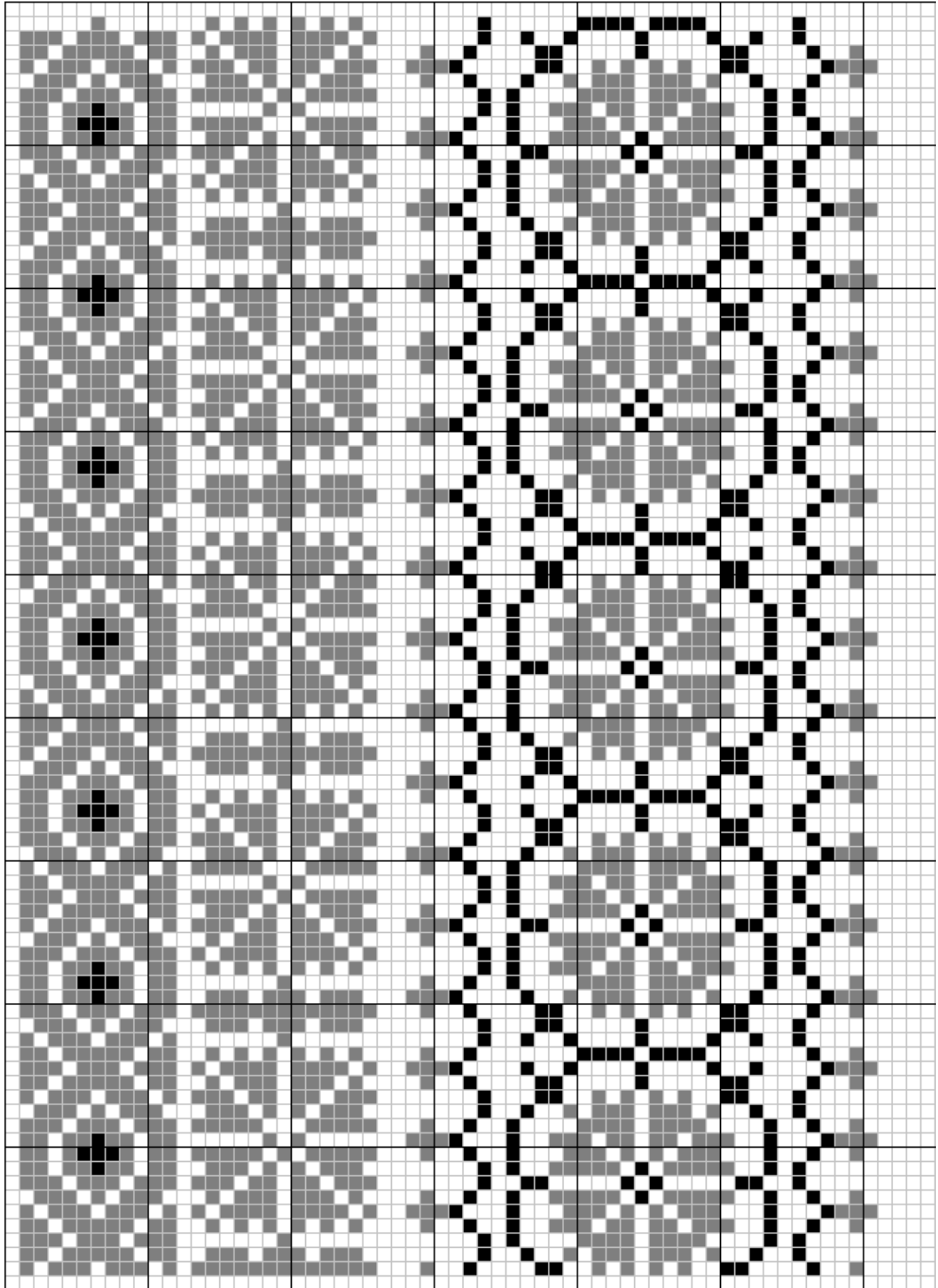
Gaza



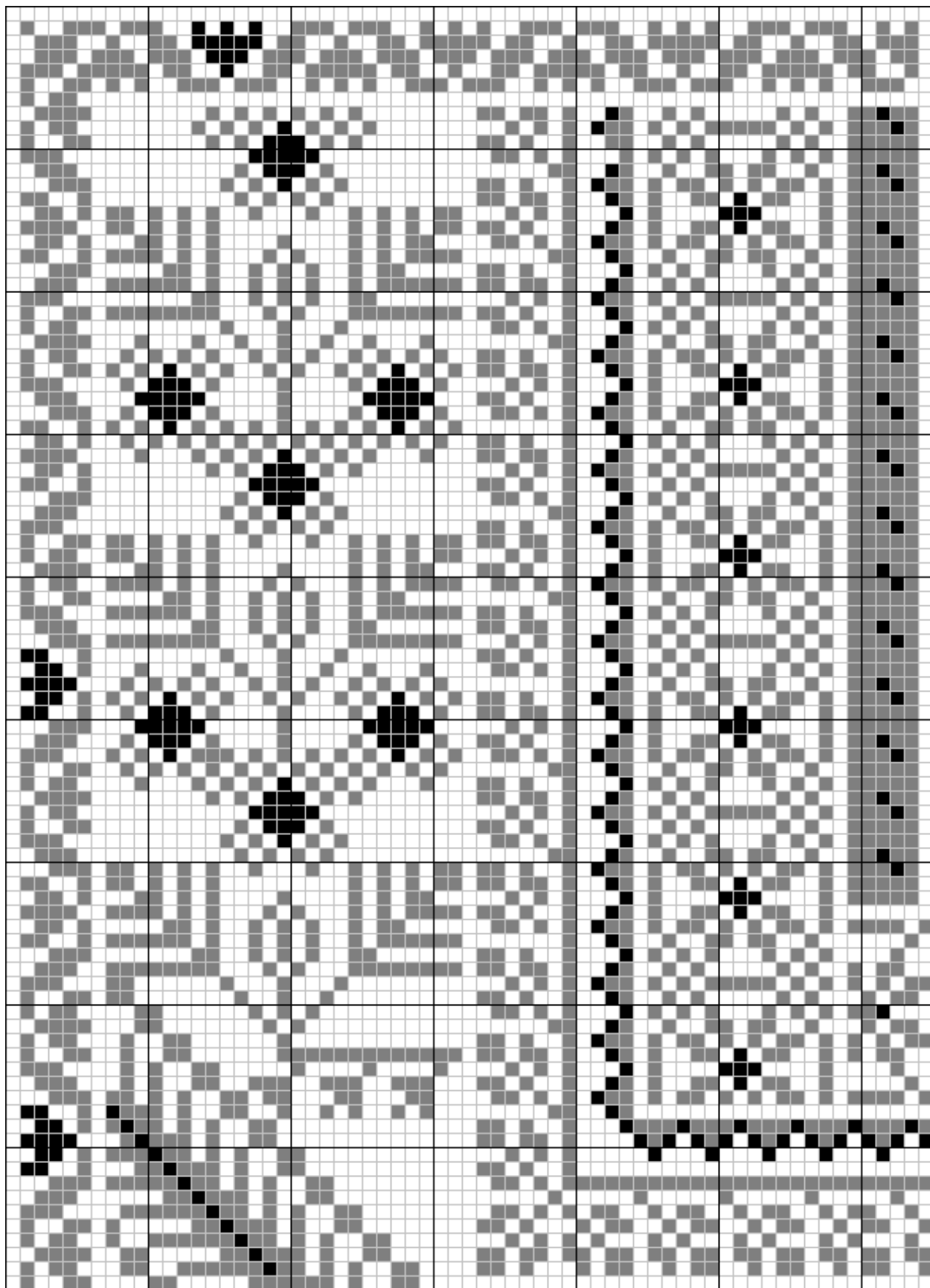
# Hebron



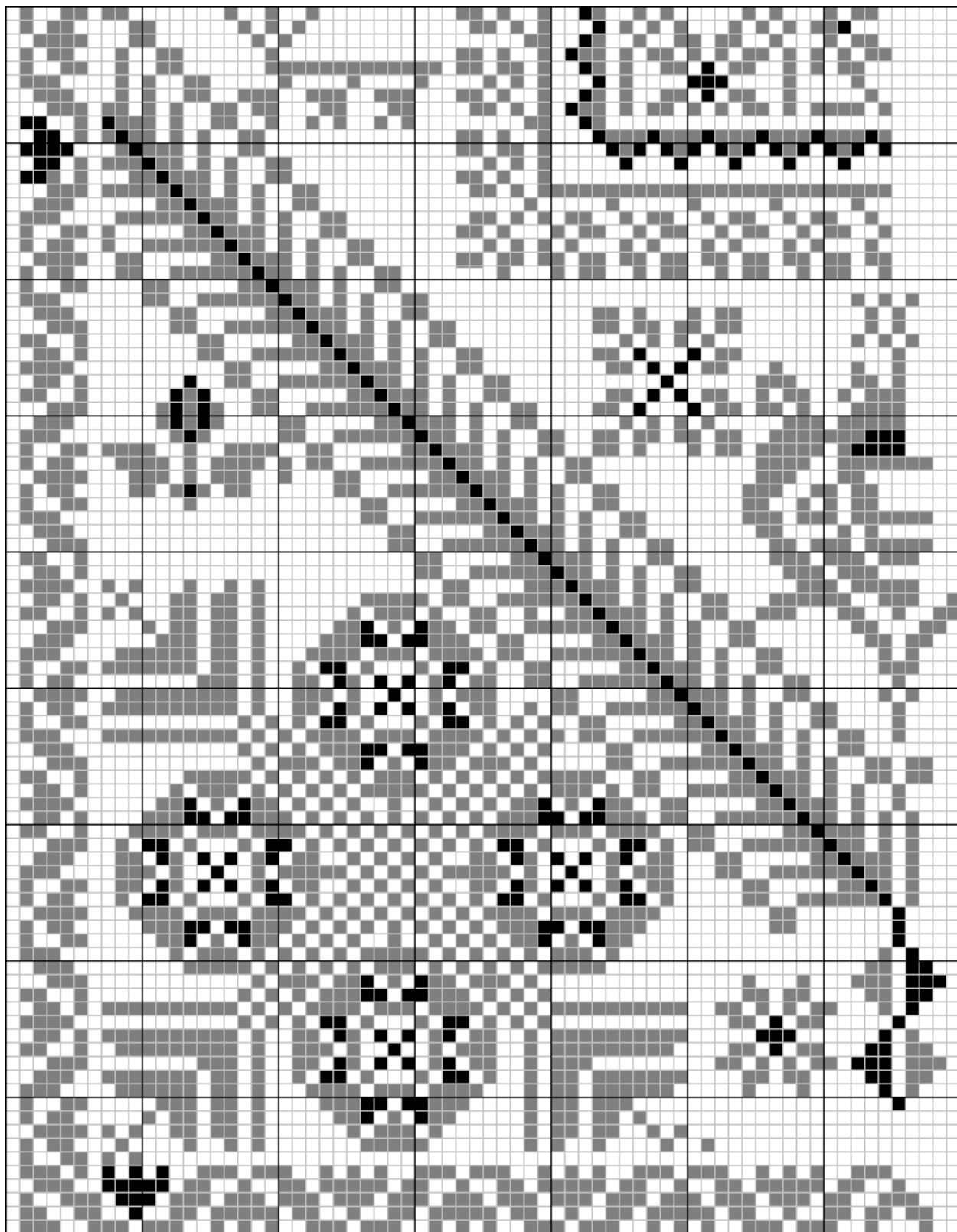
# Hebron



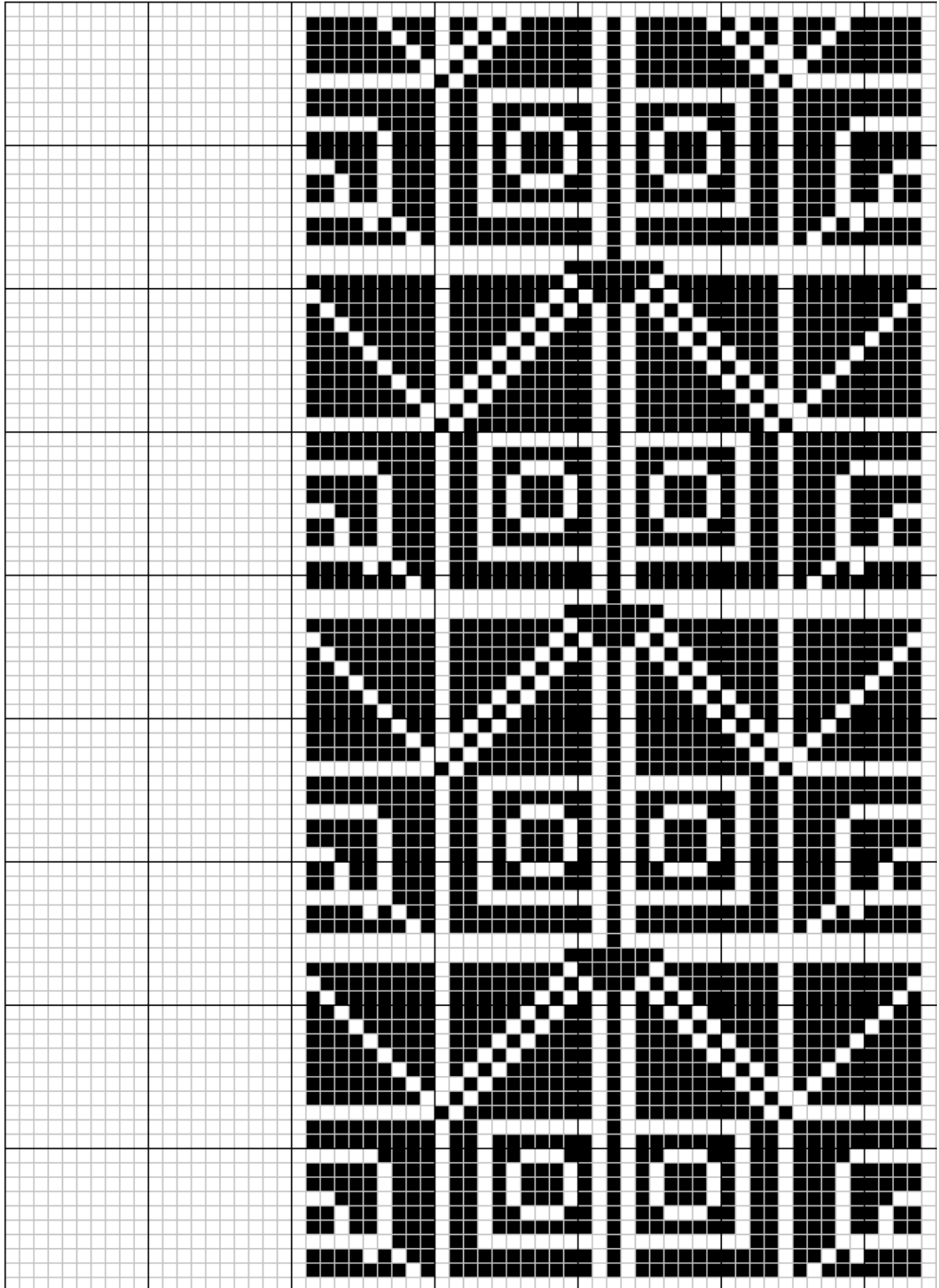
Ramallah



# Ramallah



*Southern Region*



*Southern Region*

